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THE

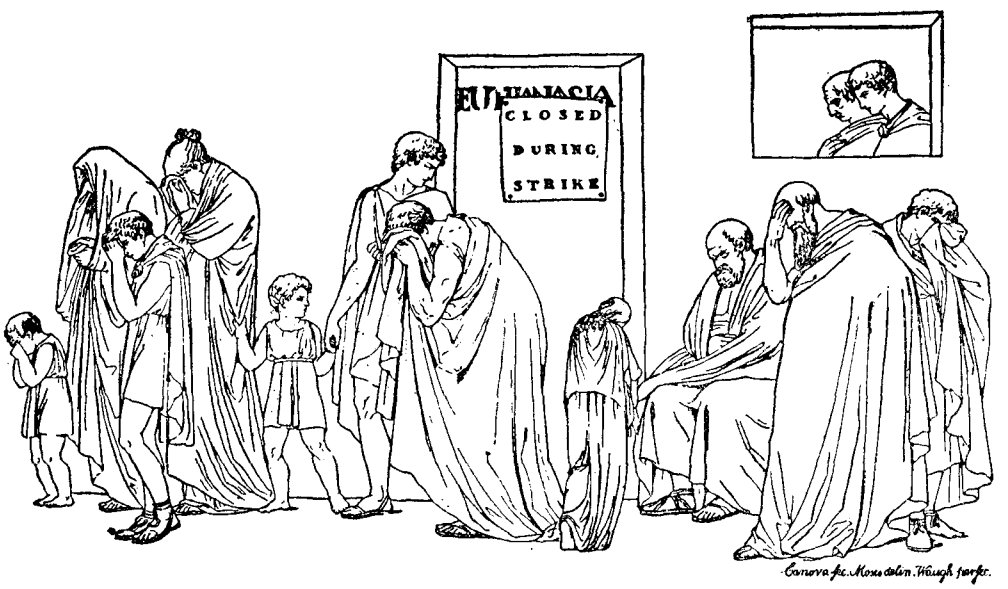
Commonweal

COMPLETE IN THIS ISSUE

Love Among the Ruins

A NEW SHORT NOVEL

by Evelyn Waugh



Volume LVIII, Number 17 July 31, 1953 Twenty Cent

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A Home Atmosphere

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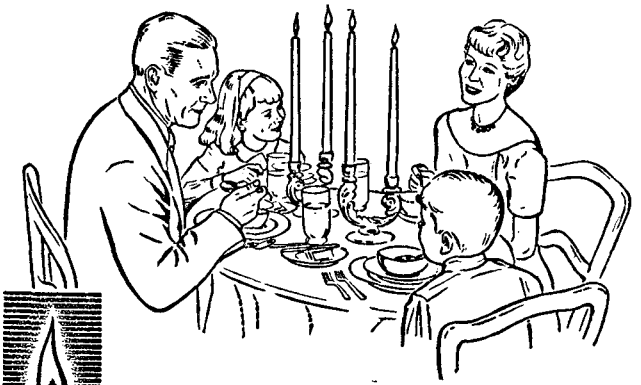

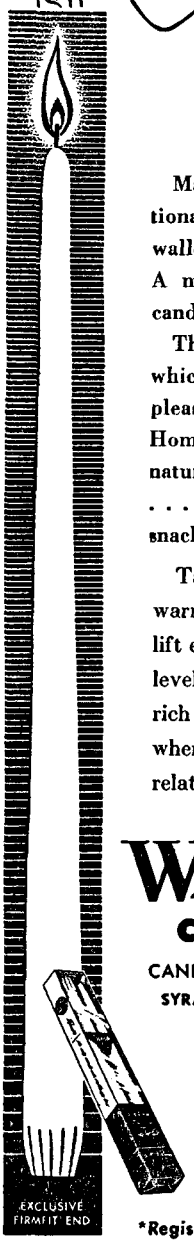

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Published weekly, printed and copyrighted 1953, in the U. S. A. by The Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc., 386 Fourth Ave., New York 16, N. Y., MUrray Hill 3-9685. Entered as second-class matter, February 9, 1934, at the post office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879. U. S. and Canada, $7 a year. Foreign, $8. Single copies, 20c.

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THE
Commonweal
week by week

JOMO KENYATTA

ON the east coast of Africa, just south of the Sudan and the curious kingdom of Ethiopia, lie the forests and lovely hill-land of the British Colony of Kenya.

If you go to dinner in Kenya today, you will wear a loaded pistol in an open holster under your dinner jacket, and you will be seated so that you can cover a door or window. Your wife will carry a small pistol, and your children will never be left unguarded.

This state of affairs is partially due to the activities of a man named Jomo (Burning Spear) Kenyatta, a member of the Kenya tribe, the Gikuyu (more generally Europeanized as "Kikuyu," and pronounced "Gekoyo").

Kenyatta was born and educated a Gikuyu warrior. He was chosen the leader of his age-group of young people, and came to be an elder of the tribe. He founded the first Gikuyu magazine in 1928, and represented his people before several Royal Commissions on land matters—land matters which were then, as now, the cradle of terror.

He spent seventeen years in Europe: on the Continent, in Moscow, and in England. He made a brilliant record as a student at the University of London, and there published a detailed anthropological study, and defense, of the Gikuyu called *Facing Mount Kenya*. This was in 1938. The book was recently reissued in Great Britain and soon will be available in this country.

Kenyatta returned to Africa to take part in the nationalist movements there, and to operate independent schools, founded to replace mission and state schools. The message he taught was that the African communal system has more profound values than the fractionalized individualism of Western civilization. He said that the West has superficial superiorities, technical accomplishments, but is essentially in error.

On the crucial question of land (central to the whole Gikuyu social system; so fundamental that an everlasting oath is to swear by the earth), he argued that the Europeans had betrayed the Africans. He said that the first Europeans to come to Kenya were looked upon as wanderers (a tragic condition in the eyes of the Gikuyu), and were given temporary right of occupancy because of the Gikuyu's generosity and pity. Out of malice, or their total ignorance of the Gikuyu system, the Europeans claimed permanent ownership of these lands, and have been expanding their claims ever since.

IN his book, Kenyatta tells this Gikuyu story: One day, in a driving rainstorm, an elephant begged a man to let him shelter his trunk in the man's hut. The man replied, "My dear good elephant, my hut is very small, but there is room for your trunk and myself. Please put your trunk in gently." The elephant put his trunk inside, slowly followed by his head, and then by his body, finally crowding out the man.

The man complained, and the elephant asked the lion, king of the jungle, for justice. The lion appointed a Royal Commission of Inquiry, made up of Mr. Rhinoceros, Mr. Buffalo, Mr. Alligator, the Rt. Hon. Mr. Fox, and Mr. Leopard. The man suggested that someone from his side be included, but the lion replied that no one from the man's side was sufficiently educated in jungle law to qualify, and that there was no call for worry, since the Commission members were "gentlemen chosen by God to look after the interests of races less adequately endowed with teeth and claws."

The elephant testified that he was only turning the hut's "undeveloped space to more economic use." The Commission found in his favor, but permitted the man, as a just compromise, to build a new hut at a new site. The man built several new huts, and each time a new animal moved in and a new Royal Commission reached the same decision. So at last the man built a big hut, with room for all the animals. But the animals disputed among themselves over favored quarters, and began to fight, and while they were fighting the man burned

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the hut down, commenting: "Peace is costly, but it's worth the expense." And, says Kenyatta, the man "lived happily ever after."

Kenyatta's activities over the past two decades won him a reputation throughout Africa as a great, and increasingly bitter, native leader. He is said to have been the instrument of the Communists, although the story related above makes one question who was the used, and who the user. In April of this year he was arrested on charges of managing the Mau Mau rebellion, and his conviction is now being disputed in the courts. Whatever happens to him, his name will live on among the native peoples of Africa, for he taught them that their own way of life had dignity and worthiness long before the European settlers arrived.

Kenyatta writes in his book: "When the European comes to Gikuyu country and robs the people of their land, he is taking away not only their livelihood, but the material symbol that holds family and tribe together. . . . The African is conditioned, by the cultural and social institutions of centuries, to a freedom of which Europe has little conception, and it is not in his nature to accept serfdom forever. . . ."

The Gikuyu seem to have learned the lesson Kenyatta was teaching. The white man could learn something from it, as he could learn from the whole story of the career of Jomo Kenyatta.

NEXT WEEK

HANS SAHL writes from Berlin to describe the Film Festival recently held there.

"Once upon a time, the art of the movies had changed the course of my generation. It was the time of Eisenstein's 'Potemkin' and Pudovkin's 'Mother,' a time in which great social events of historical significance had found an adequate medium of expression and the Russian revolution was still an exciting spiritual adventure, worth being included in our discussions about the future of mankind. Today, with bare-handed German workers fighting Russian tanks in the streets of Berlin, the tables have been turned. We are still waiting for the 'Potemkin' of today, for the great movie to come which would tell the story of a betrayed generation, of broken promises and lost illusions, of hopes for justice turned into terror and oppression, and of great human ideas which became weapons in the hands of those who wanted to destroy them. Such a picture has not been produced yet."

THE "TRAGIC IRONY"

WHEN Dr. Robert L. Johnson's retirement from the State Department's International Information Service was announced, Senator McCarthy expressed his deep regret and commended Dr. Johnson for the fine work he had done during his brief period as head of the program. That seemed the end of that. But Dr. Johnson's departure was not to prove so tranquil. It now seems that he will leave the Department in a blaze of controversy and, as we see it, of glory.

"One of the great dangers I have sensed during my term of office," Dr. Johnson says, "is that many of our most effective programs in fighting Communism are being impaired by unsupported charges that they are somehow soft on Communism.

"It is one of the tragic ironies of our times," he continues, "that some of those who are in the forefront of the fight against Communism are among those who are damaging the action programs that do battle against it."

When he was asked for comment on this observation, Senator McCarthy said he had "no idea" to whom Dr. Johnson could be referring. Many others, we believe, will have a pretty good idea.

Senator McCarthy has, in the past, shown no great reluctance to draw inferences from what was often wildly implausible evidence. The evidence here is shamefully clear. The Senator should look again.

REFUGEES

SINCE President Eisenhower took office, the nation has become accustomed to seeing the opposition to his foreign policy measures come largely from within his own party and support for his program come from the Democrats. By and large, this continues to be true. On President Eisenhower's recent foreign aid request, for example, one hundred and twenty-six Democrats and ninety-four Republicans in the House voted to support the President, while only twenty-nine Democrats joined the eighty Republicans who voted against the measure. So familiar has this pattern become that opposition to one of President Eisenhower's pieces of "must" legislation by two Democrats comes close to being newsworthy in its own right.

The two Democrats in question are Senator McCarran of Nevada and Representative Walter of Pennsylvania, authors of what is known as the McCarran Immigration Act and leading spirits in the opposition to President Eisenhower's request for special legislation on the refugee problem.

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What is involved is the President's request that the U. S. admit to this country an additional two hundred and forty thousand people, largely refugees, during the next two years.

The proposed bill merely attempts to relieve in some small way the very real pressure which exists in Western Europe, aggravated by the flight of refugees from occupied sectors into areas which are unable to care for them. Actually, the number suggested in the pending legislation is only a drop in the bucket if one considers the magnitude of the problem, but the gesture would be of some help. And it would be a practical demonstration to the world that the United States is not unmindful of the great need that exists and is prepared to exercise its leadership by admitting refugees and persuading other nations to do likewise.

Judging by the support the opposition has been able to rally, President Eisenhower will have to make a determined fight for his request, if he really wants it to pass. The bill is certainly worth fighting for, and if President Eisenhower looks for it, he should have no trouble finding ample responsible support for the measure in both parties.

HIGHER EDUCATION

WHEN the G.I. Bill was first passed, there were many who felt its educational provisions were basically unsound. What they feared was an invasion of the nation's universities and colleges by ex-GI's who would not measure up to normal educational standards. But as it worked out, the history of the G.I. Bill provides convincing proof that many more young Americans want and are mentally qualified for higher education than can afford to pay for it. Now all concerned would agree that this section of the G.I. Bill was in almost all respects a great success, from the point of view of the student, the college or university, and the nation.

A recent report of the National Manpower Council points out, however, that the G.I. Bill only touched the fringes of this problem. Less than half of those who are intellectually fitted for a college education actually get one, the Council reported to the President, and for every person who acquires a Ph.D. there are twenty-five or more who could.

The primary purpose of the Council's study at this time was to survey educational needs in the light of the nation's defense program. Along these lines the Council reported that a shortage of scientists and engineers has already had "serious consequences" on U. S. efforts to rearm. But even aside from the implications of the Council's report for those who must plan for national defense, its findings should provide a challenge for all Americans.

One immediate way to attack the problem would be increased attention to the establishment of scholarships by business, labor and civic groups, a move which would benefit both students and hard-pressed educational institutions. Long-range studies could be started to determine the practicality of what might be called a civilian equivalent of the G.I. Bill, with selections to be based on ability rather than military service. Certainly the Council's report should not be filed and promptly forgotten.

HILAIRE BELLOC

THE death of Hilaire Belloc, at 82, marks the end of an era in Catholic intellectual history—an era represented by that wonderful monster, the "Chesterbelloc." It was an era sure of the universe and sure of itself, sure of God and sure of man. It was large-minded, large-hearted, large-souled, witty and wise. It talked of "beer, beef, and bible," and celebrated Catholicism as a jolly religion.

Most of us who began our reading of modern Catholic writers before 1940 know this era. But those who began since then may not. For Belloc and Chesterton are not now fashionable. Their world—all a-bubble with reason and good humor, a curious blend of the Middle Ages and the Enlightenment—seems far away from the *l'univers concentrationnaire* we have come to know. Belloc and Chesterton knew nothing of Kierkegaard's anguish or Sartre's nausea. They were not, in any sense, "alienated." Their world was the tidy world of the English tradition—redeemed by grace.

And so they have yielded, in many quarters, to other, more "modern," less happy, less certain, writers. Their work has seemed to suffer the fate of much Victorian poetry. They have been considered irrelevant to our world.

This phenomen is a common one. Children are frequently embarrassed by the virtues of their fathers. They are so very obvious. But a later generation sees that they are in reality extremely rare, and it pays them the honor they deserve.

The virtues of Hilaire Belloc, like those of G. K. Chesterton—the virtues of the "Chesterbelloc"—are rare in any age. Great faith, great charity, and great brilliance are irrelevant to no time or place. They can teach every age—most of all our own. We were proud of Hilaire Belloc for many years. We should be proud of him for many more, and we should be grateful too. May perpetual light shine upon him.

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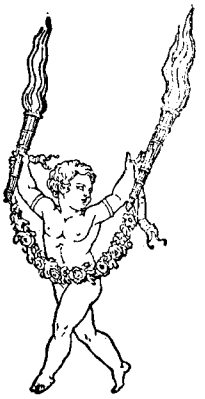

Love Among the Ruins

By Evelyn Waugh

DESPITE their promises at the last Election, the politicians had not yet changed the climate. The State Meteorological Institute had so far produced only an unseasonable fall of snow and two little thunderbolts no larger than apricots. The weather varied from day to day and from county to county as it had done of old, most anomalously.

This was a rich, old-fashioned Tennysonian night. Strains of a string quartet floated out from the drawing-room windows and were lost amid the splash and murmur of the gardens. In the basin the folded lilies had left a brooding sweetness over the water. No gold fin winked in the porphyry font and any peacock which seemed to be milkily drooping in the moon-shadows was indeed a ghost, for the whole flock of them had been found mysteriously and rudely slaughtered a day or two ago in the first disturbing flush of this sudden summer.

Miles, sauntering among the sleeping flowers, was suffused with melancholy. He did not much care for music and this was his last evening at Mountjoy. Never again, perhaps, would he be free to roam these walks.

Mountjoy had been planned and planted in the years of which he knew nothing; generations of skilled and patient husbandmen had weeded and dunged and pruned; generations of dilettanti had watered it with cascades and jets; generations of collectors had lugged statuary here; all, it seemed, for his enjoyment this very night under this huge moon. Miles knew nothing of such periods and processes, but he felt an incomprehensible tidal pull towards the circumjacent splendors.

Eleven struck from the stables. The music ceased. Miles turned back and, as he reached the terrace, the shutters began to close and the great chandeliers were one by one extinguished. By the light of the sconces which still shone on their panels of faded satin and clouded gold, he joined the company dispersing to bed through the islands of old furniture.

His room was not one of the grand succession which lay along the garden front. Those were reserved for murderers. Nor was it on the floor above, tenanted mostly by sexual offenders. His was a humbler wing. Indeed he overlooked the luggage porch and the coal bunker. Only professional men visiting Mountjoy on professional business and very poor relations had been put here in the old days. But Miles was attached to this room, which was the first he had ever called his own in all his twenty years of Progress.

His next-door neighbor, a Mr. Sweat, paused at his door to say good-night. It was only now after twenty months' proximity, when Miles's time was up, that this veteran had begun to unbend. He and a man named Soapy, survivals of another age, had kept themselves to themselves, talking wistfully of cribs they had cracked, of sparklers, of snug bar-parlors where they had met their favorite fences, of strenuous penal days at the Scrubs and on the Moor. They had small use for the younger generation; crime, calvinism and classical music were their interests. But at last Mr. Sweat had taken to nodding, to grunting, and finally, too late for friendship, to speaking to Miles.

"What price the old strings tonight, chum?" he asked.

"I wasn't there, Mr. Sweat."

"You missed a treat. Of course nothing's ever good enough for old Soapy. Made me fair sick to hear Soapy going on all the time. The viola was scratchy, Soapy says. They played the Mozart just like it was Haydn. No feeling in the Debussy pizzicato, says Soapy."

"Soapy knows too much."

"Soapy knows a lot more than some I could mention, schooling or no schooling. Next time they're going to do the Grosse Fugue as the last movement of the B flat. That's something to look forward to, that is, though Soapy says no late Beethoven comes off. We'll see. Leastways, me and Soapy will; *you* won't. You're off tomorrow. Pleased?"

"Not particularly."

"No, no more wouldn't I be. It's a funny thing but I've settled down here wonderful. Never thought I should. It all seemed a bit too posh at first. Not like the old Scrubs. But it's a real pretty place once you're

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A Romance of the Near Future

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used to it. Wouldn't mind settling here for a lifer if they'd let me. The trouble is there's no security in crime these days. Time was, you knew just what a job was worth, six months, three years; whatever it was, you knew where you were. Now what with prison commissioners and Preventative Custody and Corrective Treatment they can keep you in or push you out just as it suits them. It's not right.

"I'll tell you what it is, chum," continued Mr. Sweat. "There's no understanding of crime these days like what there was. I remember when I was a nipper, the first time I came up before the beak, he spoke up straight: 'My lad,' he says, 'you are embarking upon a course of life that can only lead to disaster and degradation in this world and everlasting damnation in the next.' Now that's talking. It's plain sense and it shows a personal interest. But last time I was up, when they sent me here, they called me an 'antisocial phenomenon;' said I was 'maladjusted.' That's no way to speak of a man what was doing time before they was in long trousers, now is it?"

"They said something of the same kind to me."

"Yes and now they're giving you the push, just like you hadn't no Rights. I tell you it's made a lot of the boys uncomfortable your going out all of a sudden like this. Who'll it be next time, that's what we're wondering?

"I tell you where you went wrong, chum. You didn't give enough trouble. You made it too easy for them to say you was cured. Soapy and me got wise to that. You remember them birds as got done in? That was Soapy and me. They took a lot of killing too; powerful great bastards. But we got the evidence all hid away tidy and if there's ever any talk of me and Soapy being 'rehabilitated' we'll lay it out conspicuous.

"Well, so long, chum. Tomorrow's my morning for Remedial Repose so I daresay you'll be off before I get down. Come back soon."

"I hope so," said Miles and turned alone into his own room.

He stood briefly at the window and gazed his last on the cobbled-yard. He made a good figure of a man, for he came of handsome parents and all his life had been carefully fed and doctored and exercised; well clothed too. He wore the drab serge dress that was the normal garb of the period—only certified homosexuals wore colors—but there were differences of fit and condition among these uniforms. Miles displayed the handiwork of tailor and valet. He belonged to a privileged class.

The State had made him.

No clean-living, God-fearing, Victorian gentleman, he; no complete man of the renaissance; no gentil knight nor dutiful pagan nor, even, noble savage. All that succession of past worthies had gone its way, content to play a prelude to Miles. He was the Modern Man.

His history, as it appeared in multuplet in the filing cabinets of numberless State departments, was typical of a thousand others. Before his birth the politicians had succeeded in bringing down his father and mother to penury; they, destitute, had thrown themselves into the simple diversions of the very poor and thus, between one war and the next, set in motion a chain-reaction of divorces which scattered them and their various associates in forlorn couples all over the Free World. The aunt on whom the infant Miles had been quartered was conscribed for work in a factory and

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shortly afterwards died of boredom at the conveyer-belt. The child was put to safety in an orphanage.

Huge sums were thenceforward spent upon him; sums which, fifty years earlier, would have sent whole quiversful of boys to Winchester and New College and established them in the learned professions. In halls adorned with Picassos and Legers he yawned through long periods of Constructive Play. He never lacked the requisite cubic feet of air. His diet was balanced and on the first Friday of every month he was psycho-analyzed. Every detail of his adolescence was recorded and microfilmed and filed, until at the appropriate age he was transferred to the Air Force.

There were no airplanes at the station to which he was posted. It was an institution to train instructors to train instructors to train instructors in Personal Recreation.

There for some weeks he tended a dish-washing machine and tended it, as his adjutant testified at his trial, in an exemplary fashion. The work in itself lacked glory, but it was the normal novitiate. Men from the orphanages provided the hard core of the Forces, a caste apart which united the formidable qualities of Janissary and Junker. Miles had been picked early for high command. Dish-washing was only the beginning. The adjutant, an Orphan too, had himself washed both dishes and officers' underclothes, he testified, before rising to his present position.

Courts Martial had been abolished some years before this. The Forces handed their defaulters over to the civil arm for treatment. Miles came up at quarter sessions. It was plain from the start, when Arson, Wilful Damage, Manslaughter, Prejudicial Conduct and Treason were struck out of the Indictment and the whole reduced to a simple charge of Antisocial Activity, that the sympathies of the Court were with the prisoner.

The Station Psychologist gave his opinion that an element of incendiarism was inseparable from adolescence. Indeed, if checked, it might produce morbid neuroses. For his part he thought the prisoner had performed a perfectly normal act and, moreover, had shown more than normal intelligence in its execution.

At this point some widows, mothers and orphans of the incinerated airmen set up an outcry from the public gallery and were sharply reminded from the Bench that this was a Court of Welfare and not a meeting of the Housewives' Union.

The case developed into a concerted eulogy of the accused. An attempt by the prosecution to emphasize the extent of the damage was rebuked from the Bench.

"The jury," he said, "will expunge from their memories these sentimental details which have been most improperly introduced."

"May be a detail to you," said a voice from the gallery. "He was a good husband to me."

"Arrest that woman," said the Judge.

Order was restored and the panegyrics continued.

At last the Bench summed up. He reminded the jury that it was a first principle of the New Law that no man could be held responsible for the consequences of his own acts. The jury must dismiss from their minds the consideration that much valuable property and many valuable lives had been lost and the cause of Personal Recreation gravely retarded. They had merely to decide whether in fact the prisoner had arranged inflammable material at various judiciously selected points in the Institution and had ignited them. If he had done so, and the evidence plainly indicated that he had, he contravened the Standing Orders of the Institution and was thereby liable to the appropriate penalties.

Thus directed the jury brought in a verdict of guilty coupled with a recommendation of mercy towards the various bereaved persons who from time to time in the course of the hearing had been committed for contempt. The Bench reprimanded the jury for presumption and impertinence in the matter of the prisoners held in contempt, and sentenced Miles to residence during the State's pleasure at Mountjoy Castle (the ancestral seat of a maimed V.C. of the Second World War, who had been sent to a Home for the Handicapped when the place was converted into a jail).

THE State was capricious in her pleasures. For nearly two years Miles enjoyed her particular favors. Every agreeable remedial device was applied to him and applied, it was now proclaimed, successfully. Then without warning a few days back, while he lay dozing under a mulberry tree, the unexpected blow had fallen; they had come to him, the Deputy Chief-Guide and the sub-Deputy, and told him bluntly and brutally that he was rehabilitated.

Now on this last night he knew he was to wake tomorrow on a harsh world. Nevertheless he slept and was gently awoken for the last time to the familiar scent of china tea on his bed table, the thin bread and butter, the curtains drawn above the luggage porch, the sunlit kitchen-yard and the stable clock just visible behind the cut-leaf copper beech.

He breakfasted late and alone. The rest of the household were already engaged in the first community-songs of the day. Presently he was called to the Guidance Office.

Since his first day at Mountjoy, when with other entrants Miles had been addressed at length by the Chief Guide on the Aims and Achievements of the

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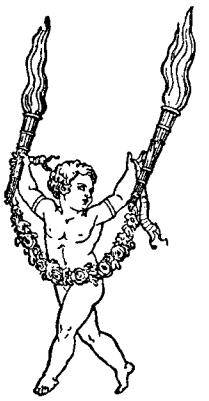
New Penology, they had seldom met. The Chief Guide was almost always away addressing penological conferences.

The Guidance Office was the former house-keeper's room stripped now of its plush and patriotic pictures; sadly tricked out instead with standard civil-service equipment, class A.

It was full of people.

"This is Miles Plastic," said the Chief Guide. "Sit down, Miles. You can see from the presence of our visitors this morning what an important occasion this is."



Miles took a chair and looked and saw seated beside the Chief Guide two elderly men whose faces were familiar from the television screen as prominent colleagues in the Coalition Government. They wore open flannel shirts, blazers with numerous pens and pencils protruding from the breast pocket, and baggy trousers. This was the dress of very high politicians.

"The Minister of Welfare and the Minister of Rest and Culture," continued the Chief Guide. "The stars to which we have hitched our wagon. Have the press got the hand-out?"

"Yes, Chief."

"And the photographers are all ready?"

"Yes, Chief."

"Then I can proceed."

He proceeded as he had done at countless congresses, at countless spas and university cities. He concluded, as he always did: "In the New Britain which we are building, there are no c... ials. There are only the victims of inadequate social services."

The Minister of Welfare, who had not reached his present eminence without the help of a certain sharpness in debate, remarked: "But I understood that Plastic is from one of our own Orphanages. . . ."

"Plastic is recognized as a Special Case," said the Chief Guide.

The Minister of Rest and Culture, who in the old days had more than once done time himself, said: "Well, Plastic, lad, from all they do say I reckon you've been uncommon smart."

"Exactly," said the Chief Guide. "Miles is our first success, the vindication of the Method."

"Of all the new prisons established in the first glorious wave of Reform, Mountjoy alone has produced a complete case of rehabilitation," the Minister of Welfare said. "You may or may not be aware that the Method has come in for a good deal of criticism both in Parliament and outside. There are a lot of young hot-heads who take their inspiration from our Great Neighbor in the East. You can quote the authorities to them till you're black in the face but they are always pressing for the all latest gadgets of capital and corporal punishment, for chain gangs and solitary confinement, bread and water, the cat-o'-nine-tails, the rope and the block, and all manner of new-fangled nonsense. They think we're a lot of old fogeys. Thank goodness we've still got the solid sense of the people behind us, but we're on the defensive now. We have to show results. That's why we're here this morning. To show them results. *You* are our Result!"

These were solemn words and Miles in some measure responded to the occasion. He gazed before him blankly with an expression that might seem to be awe.

"You'd best watch your step now, lad," said the Minister of Rest and Culture.

"Photographs," said the Minister of Welfare, "Yes, shake my hand. Turn towards the cameras. Try to smile."

Bulbs flashed all over the dreary little room.

"Give us a paw, lad," said the Minister of Rest and Culture, taking Miles's hand in his turn. "And no funny business, mind."

Then the politicians departed.

"The Deputy-Chief will attend to all the practical matters," said the Chief wearily. "Go and see him now."

Miles went.

WELL, Miles, from now on I must call you Mr. Plastic," said the Deputy-Chief. "In less than a minute you become a Citizen. This little pile of papers is *You*. When I stamp them, Miles the Problem ceases to exist and Mr. Plastic the Citizen is born. We are sending you to Satellite City, the nearest Population Center, where you will be attached to the Ministry of Welfare as a sub-official. In view of your special training you are not being classified as a Worker. The immediate material rewards, of course, are not as great. But you are definitely in the Service. We have set your foot on the bottom rung of the non-competitive ladder."

The Deputy Chief Guide picked up the rubber stamp and proceeded to his work of creation. Flip-thump, flip-thump the papers were turned and stained.

"There you are, Mr. Plastic," said the Deputy-Chief handing Miles, as it were, the baby.

At last Miles spoke: "What must I do to get back here?" he asked.

"Come, come, you're rehabilitated now, remember. It is your turn to give back to the State some of the service the State has given you. You will report this morning to the Area Progressive. Transport has been laid on. State be with you, Mr. Plastic. Be careful, that's your Certificate of Human Personality you've dropped—a *vital* document."

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Love Among the Ruins CONTINUED

II

SATELLITE City, one of a hundred such grand conceptions, was not yet in its teens but already the Dome of Security showed signs of wear. This was the name of the great municipal edifice about which the city was planned. The eponymous dome had looked well enough in the architect's model, shallow certainly but amply making up in girth what it lacked in height, the daring exercise of some new trick of construction. But to the surprise of all, when the building arose and was seen from the ground, the dome blandly vanished. It was hidden forever among the roofs and butting shoulders of the ancillary wings and was never seen again from the outside except by airmen and steeplejacks. Only the name remained. On the day of its dedication, among massed politicians and People's Choirs the great lump of building materials had shone fine as a factory in all its brilliance of glass and new concrete. Since then, during one of the rather frequent week-ends of international panic, it had been camouflaged and its windows blackened. Cleaners were few and usually on strike. So the Dome of Security remained blotched and dingy, the sole permanent building of Satellite City. There were no workers' flats, no officials' garden suburbs, no parks, no playgrounds yet. These were all on the drawing-boards in the surveyor's office, tattered at the edges, ringed by tea cups; their designer long cremated and his ashes scattered among the docks and nettles. Thus the Dome of Security comprised, even more than had been intended, all the aspirations and amenities of the city.

The officials subsisted in perpetual twilight. Great sheets of glass planned to "trap" the sun, admitted few gleams from scratches in their coat of tar. At evening when the electric light came on, there was a faint glow, here and there. When, as often, the power-station was "shedding its load" the officials stopped work early and groped their way back to their darkened huts where in the useless refrigerators their tiny rations were quietly putrefying. On working days the officials, male and female, trudged through cigarette ends round and round, up and down what had once been lift-shafts, in a silent, shabby, shadowy procession.

Among these pilgrims of the dusk, in the weeks that followed his discharge from Mountjoy, moved the exiled Miles Plastic.

He was in a key department.

Euthanasia had not been part of the original 1945 Health Service; it was a Tory measure designed to attract votes from the aged and the mortally sick. Under the Bevan-Eden Coalition the Service came into general use and won instant popularity. The Union of Teachers was pressing for its application to difficult children. Foreigners came in such numbers to take advantage of the service that immigration authorities now turned back the bearers of single tickets.

Miles recognised the importance of his appointment even before he began work. On his first evening in the hostel his fellow sub-officials gathered round to question him.

"Euthanasia? I say, you're in luck. They work you jolly hard, of course, but it's the one department that's expanding."

"You'll get promoted before you know your way about."

"Great State! You *must* have pull. Only the very bright boys get posted to Euthanasia."

"I've been in Contraception for five years. It's a blind alley."

"They say that in a year or two Euthanasia will have taken over Pensions."

"You must be an Orphan."

"Yes, I am."

"That accounts for it. Orphans get all the plums. I had a Full Family Life, State help me."

It was gratifying, of course, this respect and envy. It was well to have fine prospects; but for the time being Miles's duties were humble enough.

He was junior sub-official in a staff of half a dozen. The Director was an elderly man called Dr. Beamish, a man whose character had been formed in the nervous '30s, now much embittered, like many of his contemporaries, by the fulfilment of his early hopes. He had signed manifestos in his hot youth, had raised his fist in Barcelona and had painted abstractedly for *Horizon*; he had stood beside Spender at great concourses of Youth, and written "publicity" for the Last Viceroy. Now his reward had come to him. He held the most envied post in Satellite City and, sardonically, he was making the worst of it. Dr. Beamish rejoiced in every attenuation of official difficulties.

Satellite City was said to be the worst served Euthanasia Center in the State. Dr. Beamish's patients were kept waiting so long that often they died natural deaths before he found it convenient to poison them.

His small staff respected Dr. Beamish. They were all of the official class, for it was part of the grim little game which Dr. Beamish played with the higher authorities to economize extravagantly. His department, he maintained, could not, on its present allotment, afford workers. Even the furnace-man and the girl who despatched unwanted false teeth to the Dental Redistribution Center were sub-officials.

Sub-officials were cheap and plentiful. The Universities turned them out in thousands every year. Indeed, ever since the Incitement to Industry Act of 1955, which exempted workers from taxation—that great and popular measure of reform which had consolidated the

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now permanent Coalition Government—there had been a nefarious one-way traffic of expensively State-educated officials "passing," as it was called, into the ranks of the workers.

Miles's duties required no special skill. Daily at ten the Service opened its doors to welfare-weary citizens. Miles was the man who opened them, stemmed the too eager rush and admitted the first half-dozen; then he closed the doors on the waiting multitude until a Higher Official gave the signal for the admission of another batch.

Once inside they came briefly under his charge; he set them in order, saw that they did not press ahead of their turn, and adjusted the television set for their amusement. A Higher Official interviewed them, checked their papers and arranged for the confiscation of their property. Miles never passed the door through which they were finally one by one conducted. A faint whiff of cyanide sometimes gave a hint of the mysteries beyond. Meanwhile he swept the waiting room, emptied the waste-paper basket and brewed tea—a worker's job, for which the refinements of Mountjoy proved a too rich apprenticeship.

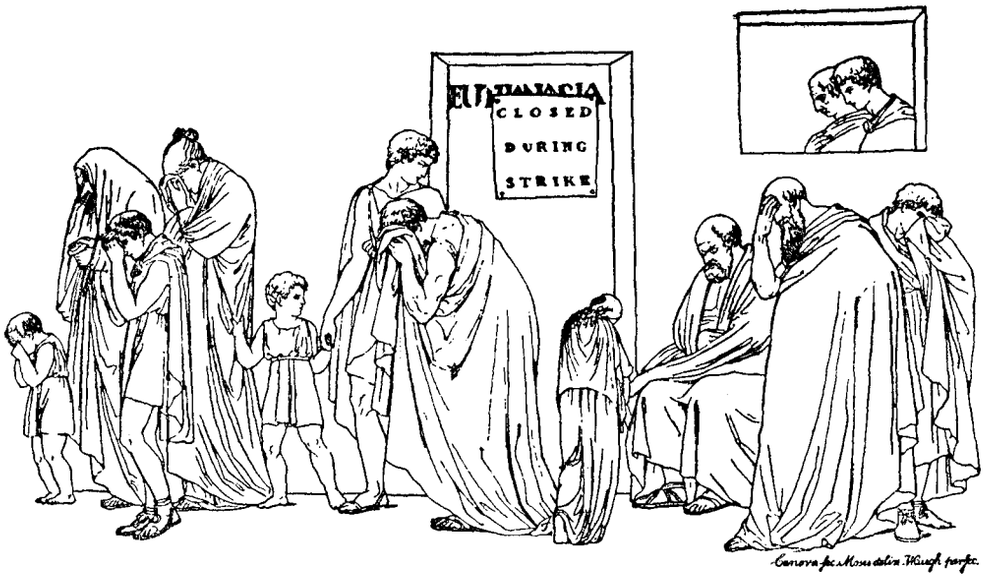
In his hostel the same reproductions of Leger and Picasso as had haunted his childhood still stared down on him. At the cinema, to which he could afford, at the best, a weekly visit, the same films as he had seen free at Orphanage, Air Force station and prison, flickered and drawled before him. He was a child of Welfare, strictly schooled to a life of boredom, but he had known better than this. He had known the tranquil melancholy of the gardens at Mountjoy. He had known ecstasy when the Air Force Training School had whirled to the stars in a typhoon of flame. And as he moved sluggishly between Dome and hostel there rang in his ears the words of the old lag: "You didn't give enough trouble."

THEN one day, in the least expected quarter, in his own drab department, hope appeared.

Miles later remembered every detail of that morning. It had started in the normal way; rather below normal indeed, for they were reopening after a week's enforced idleness. There had been a strike among the coal miners and Euthanasia had been at a standstill. Now the necessary capitulations had been signed, the ovens glowed again, and the queue at the patients' entrance stretched halfway round the dome. Dr. Beamish squinted at the waiting crowd through the periscope and said with some satisfaction: "It will take months to catch up on the waiting list now. We shall have to start making a charge for the service. It's the only way to keep down the demand."

"The Ministry will never agree to that, surely, sir?"

"Damned sentimentalists. My father and mother hanged themselves in their own back-yard with their own clothes-line. Now no one will lift a finger to help himself. There's something wrong in the system, Plastic. There are still rivers to drown in, trains—



every now and then—to put your head under; gas-fires in some of the huts. The country is full of the natural resources of death, but everyone has to come to us."

It was not often he spoke so frankly before his subordinates. He had overspent during the week's holiday, drunk too much at his hostel with other unemployed colleagues. Always after a strike the senior officials returned to work in low spirits.

"Shall I let the first batch in, sir?"

"Not for the moment," said Dr. Beamish. "There's a priority case to see first, sent over with a pink chit from Drama. She's in the private waiting-room now. Fetch her in."

Miles went to the room reserved for patients of importance. All one wall was of glass. Pressed to it a girl was standing, turned away from him, looking out at the glum queue below. Miles stood, the light in his eyes, conscious only of a shadow which stirred at the sound of the latch and turned, still a shadow merely but of exquisite grace, to meet him. He stood at the door, momentarily struck silent at this blind glance of beauty. Then he said: "We're quite ready for you now, miss."

The girl came nearer. Miles' eyes adjusted them-

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selves to the light. The shadow took form. The full vision was all that the first glance had hinted; more than all, for every slight movement revealed perfection. One feature only broke the canon of pure beauty; a long, silken, corn-gold beard.

She said, with a deep, sweet tone, all unlike the flat conventional accent of the age: "Let it be quite understood that I don't want anything done to me. I consented to come here. The Director of Drama and the Director of Health were so pathetic about it all that I thought it was the least I could do. I said I was quite willing to hear about your service, but I do *not* want anything *done.*"

"Better tell him inside," said Miles.

He led her to Dr. Beamish's room.

"Great State!" said Dr. Beamish, with eyes for the beard alone.

"Yes," she said. "It is a shock, isn't it? I've got used to it by now but I can understand how people feel seeing it for the first time."

"Is it real?"

"Pull."

"It *is* strong. Can't they do anything about it?"

"Oh they've tried everything."

Dr. Beamish was so deeply interested that he forgot Miles's presence. "Klugmann's Operation, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"It does go wrong like that every now and then. They had two or three cases at Cambridge."

"I never wanted it done. I never want anything done. It was the Head of the Ballet. He insists on all the girls being sterilized. Apparently you can never dance really well again after you've had a baby. And I did want to dance really well. Now this is what's happened."

"Yes," said Dr. Beamish. "Yes. They're far too slap-dash. They had to put down those girls at Cambridge, too. There was no cure. Well, we'll attend to you, young lady. Have you any arrangements to make or shall I take you straight away?"

"But I don't want to be put down. I told your assistant here, I've simply consented to come at all, because the Director of Drama cried so, and he's rather a darling. I've not the smallest intention of letting you kill me."

While she spoke, Dr. Beamish's geniality froze. He looked at her with hatred, not speaking. Then he picked up the pink form. "Then this no longer applies?"

"No."

"Then for State's sake," said Dr. Beamish, very angry, "What are you wasting my time for? I've got more than a hundred urgent cases waiting outside and you come in here to tell me that the Director of Drama is a darling. I know the Director of Drama. We live side by side in the same ghastly hostel. He's a pest. And I'm going to write a report to the Ministry about this tomfoolery which will make him and the lunatic who thinks he can perform a Klugmann, come round to me begging for extermination. And then I'll put them at the bottom of the queue. Get her out of here, Plastic, and let some sane people in."

Miles led her into the public waiting-room. "What an old beast," she said. "What a perfect beast. I've never been spoken to like that before even in the ballet-school. He seemed so nice at first."

"It's his professional feeling," said Miles. "He was naturally put out at losing such an attractive patient."

She smiled. Her beard was not so thick as quite to obscure her delicate ovoid of cheek and chin. She might have been peeping at him over ripe heads of barley.

Her smiles started in her wide grey eyes. Her lips under her golden moustachios were unpainted, tactile. A line of pale down sprang below them and ran through the center of the chin, spreading and thickening and growing richer in color till it met the full flow of the whiskers, but leaving on either side, clear and tender, two symmetrical zones, naked and provocative. So might have smiled some carefree deacon in the colonnaded school of fifth-century Alexandria and struck dumb the heresiarchs.

"I think your beard is beautiful."

"Do you really? I can't help liking it too. I can't help liking anything about myself, can you?"

"Yes. Oh, yes."

"That's not natural."

Clamor at the outer door interrupted the talk. Like gulls around a lighthouse the impatient victims kept up an irregular flap and slap on the panels.

"We're all ready, Plastic," said a senior official. "What's going on this morning?"

What was going on? Miles could not answer. Turbulent sea birds seemed to be dashing themselves against the light in his own heart.

"Don't go," he said to the girl. "Please, I shan't be a minute."

"Oh, I've nothing to take me away. My department all think I'm half dead by now."

Miles opened the door and admitted an indignant half-dozen. He directed them to their chairs, to the registry. Then he went back to the girl who had turned away slightly from the crowd and drawn a scarf peasantwise round her head, hiding her beard.

"I still don't quite like people staring," she said.

"Our patients are far too busy with their own affairs to notice anyone else," said Miles. "Besides you'd have been stared at all right if you'd stayed on in ballet."

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Miles adjusted the television but few eyes in the waiting-room glanced towards it; all were fixed on the registrar's table and the doors beyond.

"Think of them all coming here," said the bearded girl.

"We give them the best service we can," said Miles.

"Yes, of course, I know you do. Please don't think I was finding fault. I only meant, fancy wanting to die."

"One or two have good reasons."

"I suppose you would say that I had. Everyone has been trying to persuade me, since my operation. The medical officials were the worst. They're afraid they may get into trouble for doing it wrong. And then the ballet people were almost as bad. They are so keen on Art that they say: 'You were the best of your class. You can never dance again. How can life be worth living?' What I try to explain is that it's just because I could dance that I *know* life is worth living. That's what Art means to me. Does that sound silly?"

"It sounds unorthodox."

"Ah, but you're not an artist."

"Oh, I've danced all right. Twice a week all through my time at the Orphanage."

"Therapeutic dancing?"

"That's what they called it."

"But, you see, that's quite different from Art."

"Why?"

"Oh," she said with a sudden full intimacy, with fondness, "Oh what a lot you don't know."

The dancer's name was Clara.

III

COURTSHIP was free and easy in this epoch but Miles was Clara's first lover. The strenuous exercises of her training, the austere standards of the corps-de-ballet and her devotion to her art had kept her body and soul unencumbered.

For Miles, child of the State, Sex had been part of the curriculum at every stage of his education; first in diagrams, then in demonstrations, then in application, he had mastered all the antics of procreation. Love was a word seldom used except by politicians and by them only in moments of pure fatuity. Nothing that he had been taught prepared him for Clara.

Once in drama, always in drama. Clara now spent her days mending ballet shoes and helping neophytes on the wall bars. She had a cubicle in a Nissen hut and it was there that she and Miles spent most of their evenings. It was unlike anyone else's quarters in Satellite City.

Two little paintings hung on the walls, unlike any paintings Miles had seen before, unlike anything approved by the Ministry of Art. One represented a goddess of antiquity, naked and rosy, fondling a peacock on a bank of flowers; the other a vast, tree-fringed lake and a party in spreading silken clothes embarking in a pleasure boat under a broken arch. The gilt frames were much chipped but what remained of them was elaborately foliated.

"They're French," said Clara. "More than two hundred years old. My mother left them to me."

All her possessions had come from her mother, nearly enough of them to furnish the little room—a looking glass framed in porcelain flowers, a gilt, irregular clock. She and Miles drank their sad, officially compounded coffee out of brilliant, riveted cups.

"It reminds me of prison," said Miles when he was first admitted there.

It was the highest praise he knew.

On the first evening among this delicate bric-a-brac his lips found the bare twin spaces of her chin.

"I knew it would be a mistake to let the beastly doctor poison me," said Clara complacently.

Full summer came. Another moon waxed over these rare lovers. Once they sought coolness and secrecy among the high cow-parsley and willow-herb of the waste building sites. Clara's beard was all silvered like a patriarch's in the midnight radiance.

"On such a night as this," said Miles, supine, gazing into the face of the moon, "on such a night as this I burned an Air force Station and half its occupants."

Clara sat up and began lazily smoothing her whiskers, then more vigorously tugged the comb through the thicker, tangled growth of her head, dragging it from her forehead; re-ordered the clothing which their embraces had loosed. She was full of womanly content and ready to go home. But Miles, all male, *post coitum tristis,* was struck by a chill sense of loss. No demonstration or exercise had prepared him for this strange new experience of the sudden loneliness that follows requited love.

Walking home they talked casually and rather crossly.

"You never go to the ballet now."

"No."

"Won't they give you seats?"

"I suppose they would."

"Then why don't you go?"

"I don't think I should like it. I see them often rehearsing. I don't like it."

"But you lived for it."

"Other interests now."

"Me?"

"Of course."

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"You love me more than the ballet?"

"I am very happy."

"Happier than if you were dancing?"

"I can't tell, can I? You're all I've got now."

"But if you could change?"

"I can't."

"If?"

"There's no 'if'."

"Damn."

"Don't fret, darling. It's only the moon."

And they parted in silence.

November came, a season of strikes; leisure for Miles, unsought and unvalued; lonely periods when the ballet school worked on and the death house stood cold and empty.

Clara began to complain of ill health. She was growing stout.

"Just contentment," she said at first, but the change worried her. "Can it be that beastly operation?" she asked. "I heard the reason they put down one of the Cambridge girls was that she kept growing fatter and fatter."

"She weighed nineteen stone," said Miles. "I know because Dr. Beamish mentioned it. He has strong professional objections to the Klugmann operation."

"I'm going to see the Director of Medicine. There's a new one now."

When she returned from her appointment, Miles, still left idle by the strikers, was waiting for her among her pictures and china. She sat beside him on the bed.

"Let's have a drink," she said.

They had taken to drinking wine together, very rarely because of the expense. The State chose and named the vintage. This month the issue was "Progress Port." Clara kept it in a crimson, white-cut, Bohemian flagon. The glasses were modern, unbreakable and unsightly.

"What did the doctor say?"

"He's very sweet."

"Well?"

"Much cleverer than the one before."

"Did he say it was anything to do with your operation?"

"Oh, yes. Everything to do with it."

"Can he put you right?"

"Yes, he thinks so."

"Good."

They drank their wine.

"That first doctor did make a mess of the operation, didn't he?"

"Such a mess. The new doctor says I'm a unique case. You see, I'm pregnant."

"Clara."

"Yes, it is a surprise, isn't it?"

"This needs thinking about," said Miles.

He thought.

He refilled their glasses.

He said: "It's hard luck on the poor little beast not being an Orphan. Not much opportunity for it. If he's a boy we must try and get him registered as a worker. Of course it might be a girl. Then," brightly, "we could make her a dancer."

"Oh, don't mention dancing," cried Clara, and suddenly began weeping. "Don't speak to me of dancing."

Her tears fell fast. No tantrum this, but deep uncontrolled inconsolable sorrow.

And next day she disappeared.

IV

SANTA-CLAUS-TIDE was near. Shops were full of shoddy little dolls. Children in the schools sang old ditties about peace and goodwill. Strikers went back to work in order to qualify for their seasonal bonus. Electric bulbs were hung in the conifers and the furnaces in the Dome of Security roared again.

Miles had been promoted. He now sat beside the assistant registrar and helped stamp and file the documents of the dead. It was harder work than he was used to and Miles was hungry for Clara's company. The lights were going out in the Dome and on the Goodwill Tree in the car park. He walked the half-mile of hutments to Clara's quarters. Other girls were waiting for their consorts or setting out to find them in the Recreatorium, but Clara's door was locked. A note, pinned to it read: *Miles, Going away for a bit. C.* Angry and puzzled he returned to his hostel.

Clara, unlike himself, had uncles and cousins scattered about the country. Since her operation she had been shy of visiting them. Now, Miles supposed, she was taking cover among them. It was the manner of her flight, so unlike her gentle ways, that tortured

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him. For a busy week he thought of nothing else. His reproaches sang in his head as the undertone to all the activities of the day and at night he lay sleepless repeating in his mind every word spoken between them and every act of intimacy.

After a week the thought of her became spasmodic and regular. The subject bored him unendurably. He strove to keep it out of his mind as a man might strive to control an attack of hiccups, and as impotently. Spasmodically, mechanically, the thought of Clara returned. He timed it and found that it came every seven and one-half minutes. He went to sleep thinking of her, he woke up thinking of her. But between times he slept. He consulted the departmental psychiatrist who told him that he was burdened by the responsibility of parentage. But it was not Clara the mother who haunted him, but Clara the betrayer.

Next week he thought of her every twenty minutes. The week after that he thought of her irregularly, though often; only when something outside himself reminded him of her. He began to look at other girls and considered himself cured.

He looked hard at other girls as he passed them in the dim corridors of the Dome and they looked boldly back at him. Then one of them stopped him and said: "I've seen you before with Clara" and at the mention of her name all interest in the other girl ceased in pain. "I went to visit her yesterday."

"Where?"

"In hospital, of course. Didn't you know?"

"What's the matter with her?"

"She won't say. Nor will anyone else at the hospital. She's top secret. If you ask me she's been in an accident and there's some politician involved. I can't think of any other reason for all the fuss. She's covered in bandages and gay as a lark."

Next day, December 25th, was Santa Claus Day; no holiday in the department of Euthanasia, which was an essential service. At dusk Miles walked to the hospital, one of the unfinished edifices, all concrete and steel and glass in front and a jumble of huts behind. The hall porter was engrossed in the television, which was performing an old obscure folk play which past generations had performed on Santa Claus Day, and was now revived and revised as a matter of historical interest.

It was of professional interest to the porter for it dealt with maternity services before the days of Welfare. He gave the number of Clara's room without glancing up from the strange spectacle of an ox and an ass, an old man with a lantern, and a young mother. "People here are always complaining," he said. "They ought to realize what things were like before Progress."

The corridors were loud with relayed music. Miles found the hut he sought. It was marked "Experimental Surgery. Health Officers Only." He found the cubicle. He found Clara sleeping, the sheet pulled up to her eyes, her hair loose on the pillow. She had brought some of her property with her. An old shawl lay across the bed-table. A painted fan stood against the television set. She awoke, her eyes full of frank welcome and pulled the sheet higher, speaking through it.

"Darling, you shouldn't have come. I was keeping it for a surprise."

Miles sat by the bed and thought of nothing to say except: "How are you?"

"Wonderful. They've taken the bandages off today. They won't let me have a looking glass yet but they say everything has been a tremendous success. I'm something very special, Miles— a new chapter in surgical progress."

"But what has happened to you. Is it something to do with the baby?"

"Oh no. At least, it was. That was the first operation. But that's all over now."

"You mean our child?"

"Yes, that had to go. I should never have been able to dance afterwards. I told you all about it. That was why I had the Klugmann operation, don't you remember?"

"But you gave up dancing."

"That's where they've been so clever. Didn't I tell you about the sweet, clever new medical director? He's cured all that."

"Your dear beard."

"Quite gone. An operation the new director invented himself. It's going to be named after him or even perhaps after me. He's so unselfish he wants to call it the Clara Operation. He's taken off all the skin and put on a wonderful new substance, a sort of synthetic rubber that takes grease-paint perfectly. He says the color isn't perfect but that it will never show on the stage. Look, feel it."

She sat up in bed, joyful and proud.

Her eyes and brow were all that was left of the loved face. Below it something quite inhuman, a tight, slippery mask, salmon pink.

Miles stared. In the television screen by the bed further characters had appeared—Food Production Workers. They seemed to declare a sudden strike, left their sheep and ran off at the bidding of some kind of shop-steward in fantastic dress. The machine by the bedside broke into song, an old, forgotten ditty: "O tidings of comfort and joy."

Miles retched unobtrusively. The ghastly face regarded him with fondness and pride. At length the right words came to him; the trite, the traditional sentence uttered by countless lips of generations of baffled and impassioned Englishmen: "I think I shall go for a short walk."

But first he walked only as far as his hostel. There he lay down until the moon moved to his window and

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fell across his sleepless face. Then he set out, walking far into the fields, out of sight of the Dome of Security, for two hours until the moon was near setting.

He had traveled at random but now the white rays fell on a signpost and he read: "Mountjoy ¾." He strode on with only the stars to light his way till he came to the Castle gates.

They stood open as always, gracious symbol of the new penology. He followed the drive. The whole lightless face of the old house stared at him silently, without rebuke. He knew now what was needed. He carried in his pocket a cigarette lighter which often worked. It worked for him now.

No need for oil here. The dry old silk of the drawing-room curtains lit like paper. Paint and paneling, plaster and tapestry and gilding bowed to the embrace of the leaping flames. He stepped outside. Soon it was too hot on the terrace and he retreated further, to the marble temple at the end of the long walk. The murderers were leaping from the first story windows but the sexual offenders, trapped above, set up a wail of terror. He heard the chandeliers fall and saw the boiling lead cascading from the roof. This was something altogether finer than the strangulation of a few peacocks. He watched exultant as minute by minute the scene disclosed fresh wonders. Great timbers crashed within; outside the lily-pond hissed with falling brands; a vast ceiling of smoke shut out the stars and under it tongues of flame floated away into the tree tops.

Two hours later when the first engine arrived, the force of the fiery storm was already spent. Miles rose from his marble throne and began the long walk home. But he was no longer at all fatigued. He strode out cheerfully with his shadow, cast by the dying blaze, stretching before him along the lane.

On the main road a motorist stopped him and asked: "What's that over there? A house on fire?"

"It was," said Miles. "It's almost out now."

"Looks like a big place. Only Government property, I suppose?"

"That's all," said Miles.

"Well hop in if you want a lift."

"Thanks," said Miles, "I'm walking for pleasure."

V

MILES rose after two hours in bed. The hostel was alive with all the normal activity of morning. The wireless was playing; the sub-officials were coughing over their wash-basins; the reek of State sausages frying in State grease filled the asbestos cubicle. He was slightly stiff after his long walk and slightly footsore, but his mind was as calm and empty as the sleep from which he had awoken. The scorched-earth policy had succeeded. He had made a desert in his imagination which he might call peace. Once before he had burned his childhood. Now his brief adult life lay in ashes; the enchantments that surrounded Clara were one with the splendors of Mountjoy; her great golden beard, one with the tongues of flame that had leaped and expired among the stars; her fans and pictures and scraps of old embroidery, one with the gilded cornices and silk hangings, black, cold and sodden. He ate his sausage with keen appetite and went to work.

All was quiet too at the Department of Euthanasia.

The first announcement of the Mountjoy disaster had been on the early news. Its proximity to Satellite City gave it a special poignancy there.

"It is a significant phenomenon," said Dr. Beamish, "that any bad news has an immediate effect on our service. You see it whenever there is an international crisis. Sometimes I think people only come to us when they have nothing to talk about. Have you looked at our queue today?"

Miles turned to the periscope. Only one man waited outside, old Parsnip, a poet of the '30s who came daily but was usually jostled to the back of the crowd. He was a comic character in the department, this veteran poet. Twice in Miles's short term he had succeeded in gaining admission but on both occasions had suddenly taken fright and bolted.

"It's a lucky day for Parsnip," said Miles.

"Yes. He deserves some luck. I knew him well once, him and his friend Pimpernell. *New Writing*, the Left Book Club, they were all the rage. Pimpernell was one of my first patients. Hand Parsnip in and we'll finish him off."

So old Parsnip was summoned and that day his nerve stood firm. He passed fairly calmly through the gas chamber on his way to rejoin Pimpernell.

"We might as well knock off for the day," said Dr. Beamish. "We shall be busy again soon when the excitement dies down."

But the politicians seemed determined to keep the excitement up. All the normal features of television were interrupted and curtailed to give place to Mountjoy. Survivors appeared on the screen, among them Soapy, who described how long practice as a cat burglar had enabled him to escape. Mr. Sweat, he re-

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marked with respect, had got clear away. The ruins were surveyed by the apparatus. A sexual maniac with broken legs gave audience from his hospital bed. The Minister of Welfare, it was announced, would make a special appearance that evening to comment on the disaster.

Miles dozed intermittently beside the hostel set and at dusk rose, still calm and free; so purged of emotion that he made his way once more to the hospital and called on Clara.

She had spent the afternoon with looking-glass and make-up box. The new substance of her face fulfilled all the surgeon's promises. It took paint to perfection. Clara had given herself a full mask as though for the lights of the stage; an even creamy white with sudden high spots of crimson on the cheek bones, huge hard crimson lips, eyebrows extended and turned up catwise, the eyes shaded all around with ultramarine and dotted at the corners with crimson.

"You're the first to see me," she said. "I was half-afraid you wouldn't come. You seemed cross yesterday."

"I wanted to see the television," said Miles. "It's so crowded in the hostel."

"So dull today. Nothing except this prison that has been burned down."

"I was there myself. Don't you remember? I often talked of it."

"Did you, Miles? Perhaps so. I've such a bad memory for things that don't concern me. Do you really want to hear the Minister? It would be much cozier to talk."

"It's him I've come for."

And presently the Minister appeared, open-necked as always but without his usual smile; grave to the verge of tears. He spoke for twenty minutes. ". . . The great experiment must go on . . . the martyrs of maladjustment shall not have died in vain. . . . A greater, new Mountjoy shall rise from the ashes of the old. . . . " Eventually tears came—real tears for he held an invisible onion—and trickled down his cheeks. So the speech ended.

"That's all I came for," said Miles, and left Clara to her cocoa-butter and face-towel.

NEXT day all the organs of public information were still piping the theme of Mountjoy. Two or three patients, already bored with the entertainment, presented themselves for extermination and were happily dispatched. Then a message came from the Regional Director, official-in-chief of Satellite City. He required the immediate presence of Miles in his office.

"I have a move order for you, Mr. Plastic. You are to report to the Ministers of Welfare and Rest and Culture. You will be issued with a Grade A hat, umbrella and brief case for the journey. My congratulations."

Equipped with these insignia of sudden, dizzy promotion, Miles traveled to the capital leaving behind a domeful of sub-officials chattering with envy.

At the terminus an official met him. Together in an official car they drove to Whitehall.

"Let me carry your brief case, Mr. Plastic."

"There's nothing in it."

Miles's escort laughed obsequiously at this risqué joke.

At the Ministry the lifts were in working order. It was a new and alarming experience to enter the little cage and rise to the top of the great building.

"Do they always work here?"

"Not *always,* but very very often."

Miles realized that he was indeed at the heart of things.

"Wait here. I will call you when the Ministers are ready."

Miles looked from the waiting room window at the slow streams of traffic. Just below him stood a strange, purposeless obstruction of stone. A very old man, walking by, removed his hat to it as though saluting an acquaintance. Why? Miles wondered. Then he was summoned to the politicians.

They were alone in their office save for a gruesome young woman. The Minister of Rest and Culture said: "Ease your feet, lad," and indicated a large leatherette armchair.

"Not such a happy occasion, alas, as our last meeting," said the Minister of Welfare.

"Oh, I don't know," said Miles. He was enjoying the outing.

"The tragedy at Mountjoy Castle was a grievous loss to the cause of penology."

"But the great work of Rehabilitation will continue," said the gruesome young woman.

"A greater Mountjoy will arise from the ashes," said the Minister.

"Those noble criminal lives have not been lost in vain."

"Their memory will inspire us."

"Yes," said Miles. "I heard the broadcast."

"Exactly," said the Minister. "Precisely. Then you appreciate, perhaps, what a change the occurrence makes in your own position. From being, as we hoped, the first of a continuous series of successes, you are our only one. It would not be too much to say that the whole future of penology is in your hands. The destruction of Mountjoy Castle by itself was merely a set-back. A sad one, of course, but something which might be described as the growing pains of a great movement. But there is a darker side. I told you, I think, that our great experiment had been made only against considerable opposition. Now—I speak confidentially—that opposition has become vocal and un-

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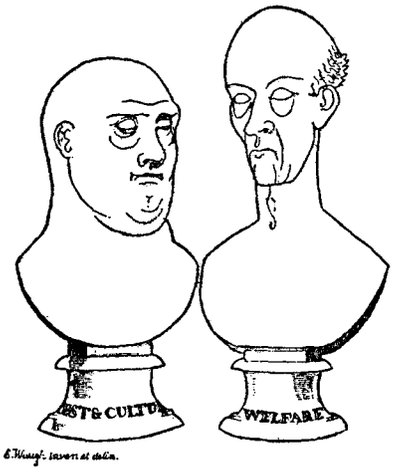
scrupulous. There is, in fact, a whispering campaign that the fire was no accident but the act of one of the very men whom we were seeking to serve. That campaign must be scotched."



"They can't do us down as easy as they think," said the Minister of Rest and Culture. "Us old dogs know a trick or two."

"Exactly. Counter-propaganda. You are our Exhibit A. The irrefutable evidence of the triumph of our system. We are going to send you up and down the country to lecture. My colleagues have already written your speech. You will be accompanied by Miss Flower here, who will show and explain the model of the new Mountjoy. Perhaps you will care to see it yourself. Miss Flower, the model please."

All the time they were speaking Miles had been aware of a bulky, sheeted object on a table in the window. Miss Flower now unveiled it. Miles gazed in awe.

The object displayed was a familiar, standard packing-case, set on end.

"A rush job," said the Minister of Welfare. "You will be provided with something more elaborate for your tour."

Miles gazed at the box.

It fitted. It fell into place precisely in the void of his mind, satisfying all the needs for which his education had prepared him. The conditioned personality recognized its proper pre-ordained environment. All else was insubstantial; the gardens of Mountjoy, Clara's cracked Crown Derby and her enveloping beard were trophies of a fading dream.

The Modern Man was home.

"There is one further point," continued the Minister of Welfare. "A domestic one but not as irrelevant as it may seem. Have you by any chance formed an attachment in Satellite City? Your dossier suggests that you have."

"Any woman trouble?" explained the Minister of Rest and Culture.

"Oh, yes," said Miles. "Great trouble. But that is over."

"You see, perfect rehabilitation, complete citizenship should include marriage."

"It has not," said Miles.

"That should be rectified."

"Folks like a bloke to be spliced," said the Minister of Rest and Culture. "With a couple of kids."

"There is hardly time for *them*," said the Minister of Welfare. "But we think that psychologically you will have more appeal if you have a wife by your side. Miss Flower here has every qualification."

"Looks are only skin deep, lad," said the Minister of Rest and Culture.

"So if you have no preferable alternative to offer . . . ?"

"None," said Miles.

"Spoken like an Orphan. I see a splendid career ahead of the pair of you."

"When can we get divorced?"

"Come, come Plastic. You mustn't look too far ahead. First things first. You have already obtained the necessary leave from your Director, Miss Flower?"

"Yes, Minister."

"Then off you both go. And State be with you."

In perfect peace of heart Miles followed Miss Flower to the Registrar's office.

Then the mood veered.

Miles felt ill at ease during the ceremony and fidgeted with something small and hard which he found in his pocket. It proved to be his cigarette-lighter, a most uncertain apparatus. He pressed the catch and instantly, surprisingly there burst out a tiny flame—gemlike, hymeneal, auspicious.

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THE STAGE

A BACKWARD GLANCE

FOR the critic (or reviewer, or commentator, or however one designates practitioners of this malign and maligning profession) a retrospective view of the Broadway season will most surely assume the proportions of a private nightmare, in which his inadequacies, excesses, misjudgments, crudities are projected large and grim on the walls of the mind. The enthusiasms which did not survive the bracing midnight air, and those more embarrassing raptures, duly recorded, which perspective has effectively cooled! No repentence possible for critics, unfortunately, but also—and thank God for it—no Undramatic Activities Committee with its crafty chairman (perhaps George Jean Nathan) lying in ambush to chivvy, harass, bully. One resolves patiently, a little sadly, to discriminate more finely, judge coolly, praise with restraint. But always—"next time."

Of the past season, the humiliating fact must be recorded that its major rewards—the incandescent Barrault-Renaud repertoire, the revivals of "Misalliance" and "Love's Labour's Lost," Dylan Thomas' "Under Milk Wood," "Wonderful Town," Blitzstein's opera "Regina," the several triumphs of Beatrice Lillie and Emlyn Williams—were either imported or had (but for the Bernstein musical) only a peripheral connection with the working, commercial structure of Broadway. In dramatic literature, the year was lustreless: with the exception of John Ashbery, whose witty charade "The Heroes" displayed a richly ironic dramatic potential, it saw the arrival of not one new American playwright of interest. For the rest, there was confirmation and, occasionally, growth: in the polemic dignity of Arthur Miller's "The Crucible;" Mr. Inge's melancholy tenderness, and the fine wry intelligence of Arthur Laurents' "The Time of the Cuckoo." Miss Delmar's underrated "Mid-Summer" had, too, a tart, personal flavor, as did Peter Ustinov's over-rated (by me, alas) "Love of Four Colonels." Everywhere there was taste, sensibility, the refinements of feeling: in the stylistic eloquence of the direction of Clurman and Kazan, Cyril Ritchard and Albert Marre; in John Boyt's giddy decor for "Misalliance," and Robert Fletcher's handsome costuming of the Shakespeare revival; in the musical impeccability of the Gilbert & Sullivan repertoire, Lemuel Ayers' gorgeous mounting of the ante-bellum "Aida," and the sophisticated innocence of Bernstein's lovely score.

Supremely, it was a season of performance: the Barraults, Shirley Booth, Geraldine Page, Emlyn Williams, Miss Lillie, Rosalind Russell, Joseph Schildkraut, Margaret Sullavan, Eli Wallach, Lilli Palmer, Helen Gallagher. Elsewhere, I have tried, however inadequately, to honor and pay tribute, but there remain still the small pleasures, generously given and ungratefully received, which no critic limited by space can, through the year, acknowledge. Tragically, too, for these were often among the authentic distinctions of the season: the brilliant clowning of Hurd Hatfield and Philip Bourneuf in "Love's Labour's Lost;" Barry Jones' exuberant Shavian tycoon, and the ineradicable memory of Jerome Kilty as the village anarchist bobbing up and down in a Turkish bath; Jennie Goldstein's raucous vivacity among the ruins of "Camino Real" (which provided, however, a first-rate controversy); Lydia St. Clair's fine asperity in the Laurents' drama; the transfiguration of Tyrone Power into an actor of incontestable skill; Anne Meacham's eloquent intensity; Eileen Heckart's ravaged portrait of a lonely spinster in "Picnic" and the delicious caricatures of Rita Shaw and Elizabeth Wilson in the same play; George Gaynes' charm and musical authority in "Wonderful Town," and the impressive debuts—often in plays of unequal or no discernible merit—of Rosemary Harris, Paul Newman, Michael Wager, Viveca Lindfors, Mark Stevens, Jenny Hecht, Roddy McDowall, Robert Coote, Janet Parker.

Theatre is the impermanent art, but before Broadway continues, with jolly brutality, in its perpetual quest after novelty, I should wish to express gratitude to those who take it, occasionally, out of the dust of diversion, indulgence or habit, and give it, however modestly, the stature of a journey among the splendors and miseries, the inconstant beauties of human life and action.

RICHARD HAYES.

THE SCREEN

HITCH YOUR WAGON

AS IF to disprove the notion that summer movies have to be ephemeral, M-G-M turns up with a new musical that is both thoughtful and entertaining. All that "The Band Wagon" owes to the original stage revue are its name, some swell songs by Arthur Schwartz and Howard Dietz, and its star: Fred Astaire. To this promising start, Producer Arthur Freed added a bright script written by Betty Comden and Adolph Green, a supporting cast made up of people who are stars in their own right, and a series of lively dances and musical numbers staged by Michael Kidd. And Director Vincente Minnelli, who knows how to make a musical movie that is intelligent as well as cinematic, has whipped the whole thing into a top-notch film without a dull moment in it.

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Civil Liberties III

"Catholics have done much lamenting in the past over the secularistic basis of modern liberalism, its hostility to the religious spirit and its anti-clericalism. There is no question that these elements have been and are present in the liberal tradition, and that they must be opposed by every Catholic. But their presence may be explained, at least in part, by the fact that Catholics have too often absented themselves from the formation of the modern world. Nostalgic for a sacral past, anxious to preserve our own special privileges, we have too frequently left the struggle for civil freedom to those who know nothing of the profound spiritual roots of that freedom. . . ."

Editorial
in The Commonweal
June 13, 1952

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Hollywood has used the plot about the fading movie star who hopes for a Broadway come-back so often that it has become a cliché, but "The Band Wagon" freshens this story up a bit, satirizes theater folk, and even lets Astaire play his age as a washed-up refugee from the movie colony. Fiftyish he might be, but he's as nimble-footed as ever in solo numbers like "Shine on Your Shoes" and in duets with Cyd Charisse. And Miss Charisse, though limited in acting ability, is beautiful, and as fine a dancing partner as Fred has ever had in the movies. Portraying the husband-and-wife team, who are writing the show that is to star Fred and Cyd, Nanette Fabray and Oscar Levant are in good comedy form. And as the director of this show, versatile Jack Buchanan does a brilliant take-off on all-purpose theatrical people like Jose Ferrer.

I HAVE no complaint about the temperature of the theater in which I saw the latest Technicolor 3-D venture, "Second Chance," but I do have a few complaints about the plot. It concerns three people: a former gangster's moll (Linda Darnell) who is in South America trying toescape from her ex-boy friend; a thug (Jack Palance) sent by the gangster to dispose of the moll so she can't testify back in the States; and a prize fighter (Robert Mitchum) who is trying to work out the psychological problem he was stuck with when he killed his last opponent in the ring. Without even using half your imagination you can write the rest of this one yourself.

THE best new example of an inexpensively-made film that is absorbing from beginning to end is "Vice Squad." In spite of its lurid name, this picture has a documentary-like quality in telling about the operations of a metropolitan police department and an authenticity that makes it outstanding adult fare. It deals with the hard day's work of a police captain.

Edward G. Robinson plays the captain well, without even a touch of the hamming he sometimes goes in for; and he is surrounded by a group of good actors portraying policemen, robbers, victims, passers-by, gangsters, prostitutes and the others whose lives get involved with the detective bureau on this particular day. It is to Director Arnold Laven that credit should go. He uses the well-written script effectively and the Los Angeles background advantageously without cluttering up his picture with arty shots. The subject matter isn't exactly nice, but neither is what goes on in a police station. Certain aspects of "Vice Squad" are reminiscent of "Detective Story," but because of its directness, and lack of theatrical hokum, the new movie is better.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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The Squander of Innocence

THE SISTERS MATERASSI. By Aldo Palazzeschi. Doubleday. $3.50.

By DORIS GRUMBACH

TWO discernible paths wander off from the realistic mainstream of the postwar Italian novel. Silone's virile proletarianism affected the young writers of the forties, to the extent that a romantic discontent pervaded their work, but minus the active impetus toward revolution. Berto, Pavese, Vittorini are of this group. A second offshoot recognized the limiting effects of subject-matter chosen strictly on class lines and developed the Italian version of the Proustian novel—introspective, in love with the physical accoutrements of the past, and enjoying a leisurely dalliance with all the possibilities of spiritual decay through the agency of great bodily beauty. Palazzeschi must be a major representative of this group if this, his first novel to be translated into English, is characteristic of the considerable body of his work since 1918.

No breath of class struggle or postwar realism blows through the decaying and ancient Florentine house of the Materassis. It is just after World War I. Elegant carriages bring to their door equally elegant customers, come from all over Italy to patronize their wonderfully skilled needles, for they are embroiderers and seamstresses of lingerie, working ceaselessly and piling up a fortune against the financial debacle left to them by their feckless father.

Into their orderly and undeviating lives comes a young nephew, left to their care by a dying sister. Remo is fourteen and of extraordinary beauty. His perfect features are suffused by an almost unearthly innocence and naiveté, and before his physical attractions the aging maiden sisters and their elderly housekeeper, Niobe, stand aghast and stricken. They are reduced to the desiccated shreds of their girlhood passions. One of them hugs him incessantly; the other spreads before his well-disguised avariciousness all the hard-earned profits of a whole lifetime of labor and self-denial.

Little by little he becomes master of the house. His aunts are his "tame monkeys," and his wholesale assault upon their resources is as natural to him as his earlier acquiescence and charming agreeableness. Finally the sisters are reduced to penury and near-hunger by a shocking act of viciousness perpetrated against their trusting integrity. And then again (the author is too restless to let the penultimate irony stand uncanceled but adds another, almost unbearable, one as a finale) their defeat is compounded: in the end Remo leaves them for a rich American marriage, and his large-as-life photograph dominates the rest of their work-filled lives. Tacked to the wall of their sewing room, a cardboard reproduction of his perfect body and features remains as a symbol of the power of an amoral virility over the weaknesses of a stifled and subjugated morality.

It takes Palazzeschi a long time to tell this simple story, for his subsidiary interests are varied, and he is often sidetracked by complex metaphor and simile. These stylistic tangents are worth his time and the reader's, and they enrich a novel already full of interest. But his primary concern is with character, both dominant and recessive. Like Proust he submits good to evil and microscopically examines the results. And like Proust again, the struggle between the two is unevenly weighted because eccentricities of character and personality outbalance the strength of moral decision.

The irony of Remo's triumph over his aunts does not, however, constitute a judgment of the author's. One is rather impressed by his entire objectivity. The Materassis and their beautiful, evil nephew are, like the Guermantes, specimens worthy of exact and loving investigation and display, and, in their way, they are as fascinating and worthwhile to the reader.

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Sharp Dissension

SOVIET IMPERIALISM: Its Origin and Tactics. Edited by Waldemar Gurian. University of Notre Dame. $3.75.

By JOHN A. LUKACS

THIS volume in the Notre Dame Committee on International Relations' International Studies series is a symposium of articles relating to a problem of greatest import. This problem is the relation and proportion of Communist aggressiveness to Russian expansion. It is part and parcel of a larger question: whether Russian power or international Communism be the main source of our dangers. The confusion around this question has become so tremendous that it brought some rather unattractive by-products to American national life. The Notre Dame volume, however, is addressed to the Russian Empire: is it the revolutionary Communist or the very Russian nature of that empire which is primarily responsible for its aggressive and threatening spectre?

About this question there have been a few scholarly explorations. Their fate is instructive. The English condensation of the Polish Professor Kucharzewski's masterly work on the origins of modern Russia could not find a publisher in the maudlin climate of 1946; ill-translated, published by a private Polish-American organization, it earned but general neglect and a few smug reviews. The straightforward article of George Kennan, published two years ago in *Foreign Affairs*, "America and the Russian Future," brought to its author miscomprehension and vulgar denunciation from many quarters. The problem, obviously, is an explosive one—I am consciously avoiding "controversial," that pale adjective—and this is reflected in many ways. One of them is the method of dialectic through which responsible professors become orators and partisans. This is a sad development; again, proof that emotions often best reason in political argument, a circumstance under which the term "political science" sounds somewhat empty.

Thus we see that eminent and honest scholar, N. S. Timasheff, argue heatedly that Marxism and Communism alone have made Russia the aggressive power she is today. No doubt images of a past, of a nobler Russia, memories of Saint Petersburg, stand out in Professor Timasheff's earnest mind as he strives to defend the Russian nation from blanket condemnation. Yet his methods are not propitious ones, and his case is, accordingly, weak. Thus we find Professor Timasheff implying that the present Russian frontiers have some justification; we find him juggling with the rather questionable statistical antics of Sorokin and Quincy Wright. When Professor Timasheff states that the old Russia "never speculated about the universal validity of her ideal," disregarding the great Slavophiles, Danilevsky and Dostoievsky, he is going very far; when he praises the role of Alexander at the Congress of Vienna as European and constructive, he strays even further.

But the second contributor, Michael Pap, reveals a mood that is far worse; Pap is a Ukrainian nationalist; the results are obvious. He sees the Ukrainians as the golden boys of Eastern Europe, struggling between treacherous Russians and slovenly Poles. There exists a case for the Ukraine, of course. But such a presentation can but weaken it in the eyes of serious men, when it touches on historical dishonesty and contains falsehoods, as in Pap's account of the Russo-Polish War of 1920, as in his reference to the "Independent Cossack State" of 1648, as in his description of the Carpatho-Ukrainian operetta state of 1939. Writing of the last war, Professor Pap glorifies a "Ukrainian Insurgent Army" which, in reality, was half marauders, half myth; and he writes, "Stalin was already an ally of the West; thus all the [Ukrainians'] hopes of receiving moral and material support from the free world for the battle against the Bolshevist tyranny were destroyed." But the Ukrainians had not looked to the West. They looked to Hitler and, indeed, with much crude opportunism. The fact that Hitler disappointed them is another story; but it is a German, and not a Ukrainian one.

The last three essays are best; the views of Professors Weintraub, Ling Nai-jui and Barghoorn are reasonable and balanced. When Weintraub mentions how in Communist Poland it had been possible for some time to exercise academic critique over Marxist doctrine while it was impossible to make the least critical allusion to Russia, Soviet or Tsarist; when Professor Ling concludes that "the objectives of Soviet diplomacy in China remain exactly identical to those of the Tsarist Government, marked by the same imperialism, barbarian and Machiavellian, made only the more cynical by the adoption of an ambiguous phraseology to cloak the reality," they demolish the forced arguments of Profesor Timasheff; and Professor Barghoorn's Russian experiences often contradict the thesis of Pap.

Professor Gurian should be praised for his serious effort to organize this discussion and publish the proceedings. The alarmingly sharp dissension among "experts" merely indicates the magnitude of the problem whose importance has hitherto not been adequately explored by American diplomacy and in whose day-to-day handling the Department of State often reveals erratic methods and a tepid temper.

Average Heroism

THE BRIDGES AT TOKO-RI. By James A. Michener. Random House. $2.50.

By EDWIN KENNEBECK

JAMES A. Michener has sketched some aspects of the Korean war, apparently uncertain whether it was better to make a report or a novel out of the incidents he has observed, and whether to adjust a panoramic or personal focus on them. When the story does focus on a personal adventure its principal center is Harry Brubaker, a Denver lawyer, now unluckily recalled to the Navy. He is one of the jet pilots based on a carrier in the

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rough waters off Korea, and he meets his death on the ground after helping to bomb four bridges which are important points in the Communist supply lines.

Brubaker is an "average man" to whom extraordinary things happen. Mr. Michener has unfortunately put a good deal of emphasis on the happenings and very little on the "individual heroism" which the book's jacket claims as the subject of the story. The best parts are the bare descriptions of physical activity involved in launching and landing the jet bombers, in the helicopter rescue operations, and in the actual bombing of targets. There is an impersonal kind of drama, for instance, in the picture of planes attempting to land on the swaying deck of the carrier within limited allotments of time. But when the author tries to turn his work into a novel about people, the authority and excitement diminish perceptibly.

Michener's jet pilot, fitting himself into a fantastic cocoon of protective clothing before climbing into his plane, has no special purpose or folly to isolate him as a separate man in whom the tragedy of the story can be memorably grounded. At one point he says, "Sometimes I'm so bitter I could bitch up the works on purpose." When the Admiral asks, "Why don't you?" Brubaker says, "You know why I don't, sir. The catapult fires. There's that terrific moment and you're out front. On your way to Korea. So you say, 'What the heck? I'm here. Might as well do the job.' " This badly handled piece of dialogue is perhaps an attempt to suggest what may be, in some cases, the only effective explanation for such courage: the "average man" flying to his death within the boundaries of an adjustable valor. But the more "average" your fictional hero, the less impressive his experience.

There was a Kafkaesque passage in Colonel Voorhees' *Korean Tales* in which a reporter asked General Van Fleet, "General, what is our goal?" Van Fleet replied, "I don't know, the answer must come from higher authority." The reporter said, "How may we know, General, when and if we achieve victory?" The General replied, "I don't know, except that somebody higher up will have to tell us." In such a war there may be a totally new and terrible quality of heroism behind some of the gestures; there must, we have to hope, be the substance of a genuinely tragic novel, which Mr. Michener has not pretended to approach.

He does make numerous attempts to give the story a special flavor. He tells us that Brubaker has a wife and two daughters, and even brings them into the story; he tells us that Admiral Tarrant considers Brubaker his protégé, and describes the Admiral characteristically brandishing a cup of coffee; the rescue helicopter pilot wears a green stovepipe hat in the midst of stress and danger. But the author's head-on approach (explanation first, dramatization afterwards) to these and other "characteristic" touches frequently gives the story an artificial, assembled look.

The Bridges at Toko-ri was originally written (or at least completed) for *Life* magazine and published in the July 6 issue. There it had the air of a good journalistic piece, an attempt to remind us of the sacrifices made by a generous few for the sake of the more or less uncaring multitudes in other parts of the world. In such a context Mr. Michener's technical deficiencies, and the liberties he takes for the sake of his message, seemed excusable. In book form, with a jacket that calls the novel a masterpiece, they make his achievement seem smaller.

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